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OUTWITTING THE WEASELS  
AND  
NEW-FANGLED NOTIONS



OUTWITTING *the* WEASELS  
AND  
NEW-FANGLED NOTIONS

*TWO PLAYS FOR CHILDREN,*

BY  
HELEN HARRINGTON

ADAPTED FROM STORIES BY  
CLARA D. PIERSON



NEW YORK  
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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR  
PRODUCING



# PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PRODUCING

## COSTUMES

Complete costumes for the characters in these plays may be obtained from any theatrical costumer.

In the case of amateur production, where it is desirable for the players to make their own costumes, the following suggestions are offered:

Heads, masks, caps, etc., to represent the characters may be obtained from The Bankograph Co., Inc., 65 West 37th Street, New York, N. Y.

Detailed description of color, markings, etc., for costumes for *New Fangled Notions* may be found in any poultry book, which would be obtainable in local libraries. Detailed description for costumes for *Outwitting the Weasels* may be found in the little Reed Bird Guides, entitled "Land Birds East of the Rockies," and published by Doubleday, Page & Co. The Audubon Society recommends these books for the faithful portrayal of bird colors.

For permission to use the instructions for costumes and the accompanying diagram, the author is indebted to Mr. Ernest Harold Baynes, of the Meriden Bird Club.

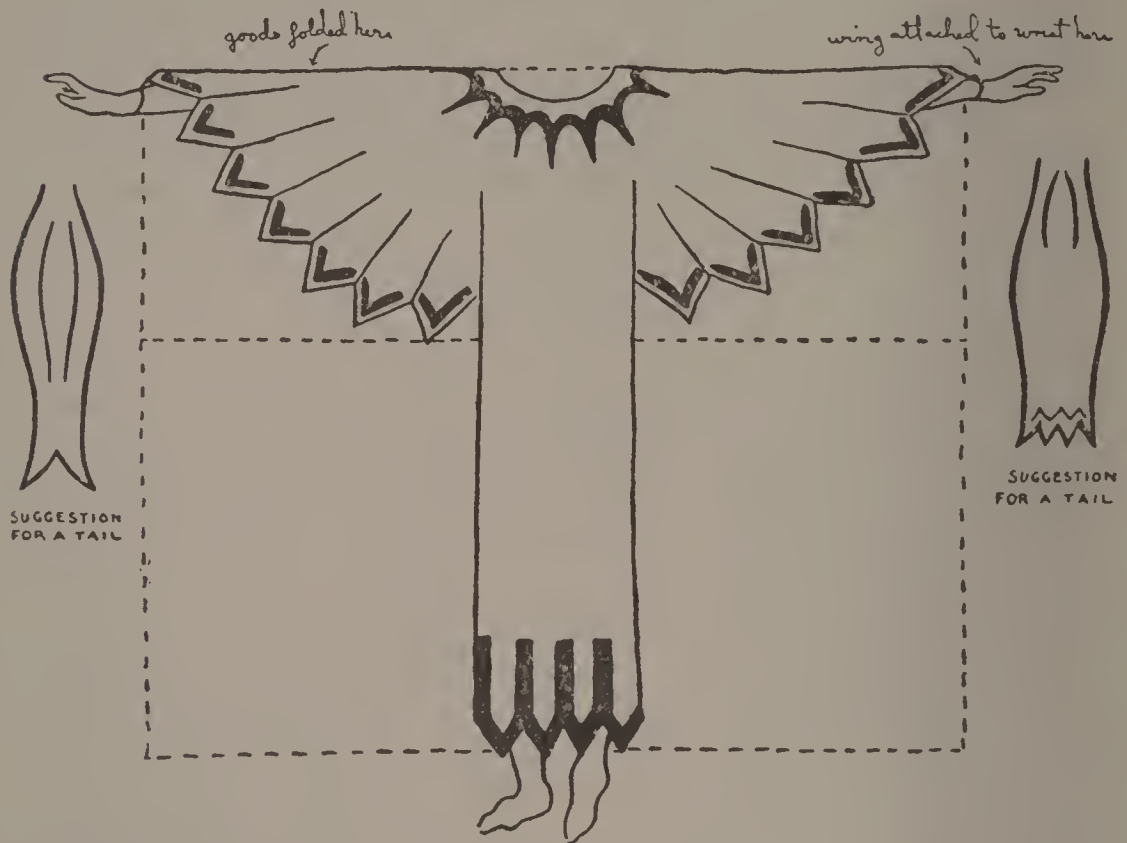


Diagram of a costume such as was used by those who participated as birds in the finale of the bird-masque "Sanctuary," by Percy MacKaye. Designed by Miss Ruth Tate, 252 Humphrey Avenue, Greensboro, N. C. The costume here represented is for the Baltimore Oriole, the colors yellow and black being used.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Measure material as follows. From upper line of shoulders, or outstretched arms, to ankles; then double, fold coming at top of costume.

Cut in middle of this fold at top, round place for neck.

The dotted lines represent the square piece of material before "wings" are shaped.

Cutting material out from notches of "feathers" makes costume more effective.

The neck feathers may be indicated by the use of separate pieces of material (black) cut in points as illustrated and laid on the yellow material. With costumes for other birds this method may be used if the bird has a brightly colored breast, a terracotta red or brown gray material for the robin, etc.

A cap with a beak-like visor may be used when it is not desired to procure "heads."

## STAGE TERMS

C.—Center

R.—Right

L.—Left

U.L.—Up Left

U.R.—Up Right

Down R.—Down Right

Down L.—Down Left

R.1 E.—Right First Entrance

R.2 E.—Right Second Entrance

R.U.E.—Right Upper Entrance

L.U.E.—Left Upper Entrance

L.2 E.—Left Second Entrance

L.1 E.—Left First Entrance

Down—Toward the Audience

Up—Toward Back of Stage

Left—Left of Actor as he faces the Audience

Right—Right of Actor as he faces the Audience



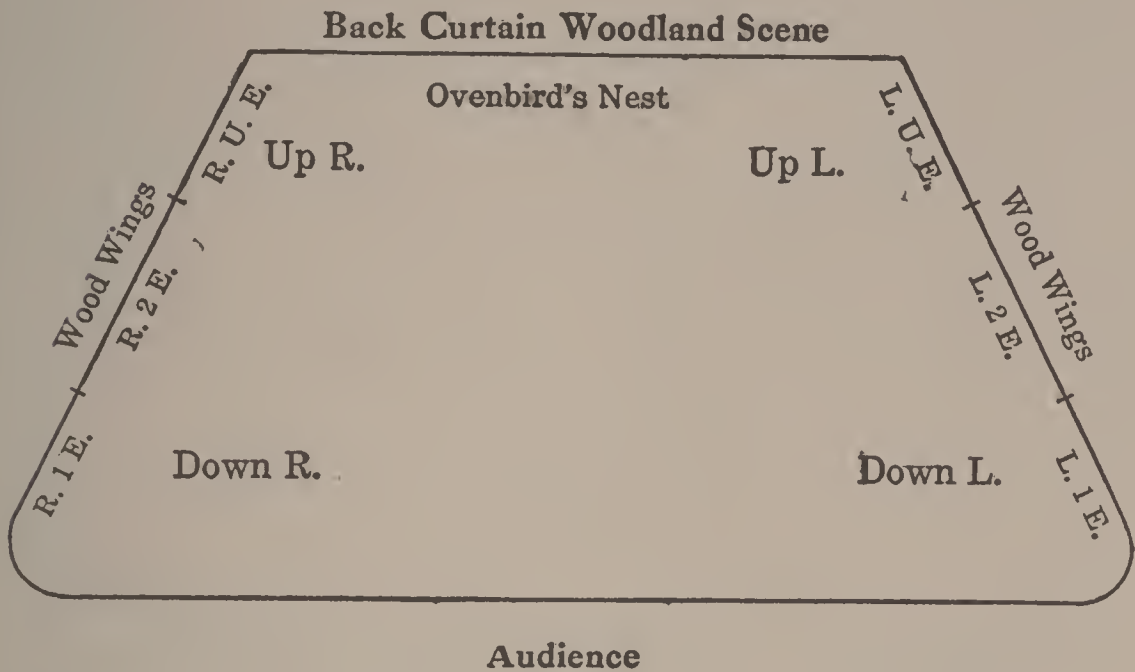


Diagram of Stage for **OUTWITTING THE WEASELS**

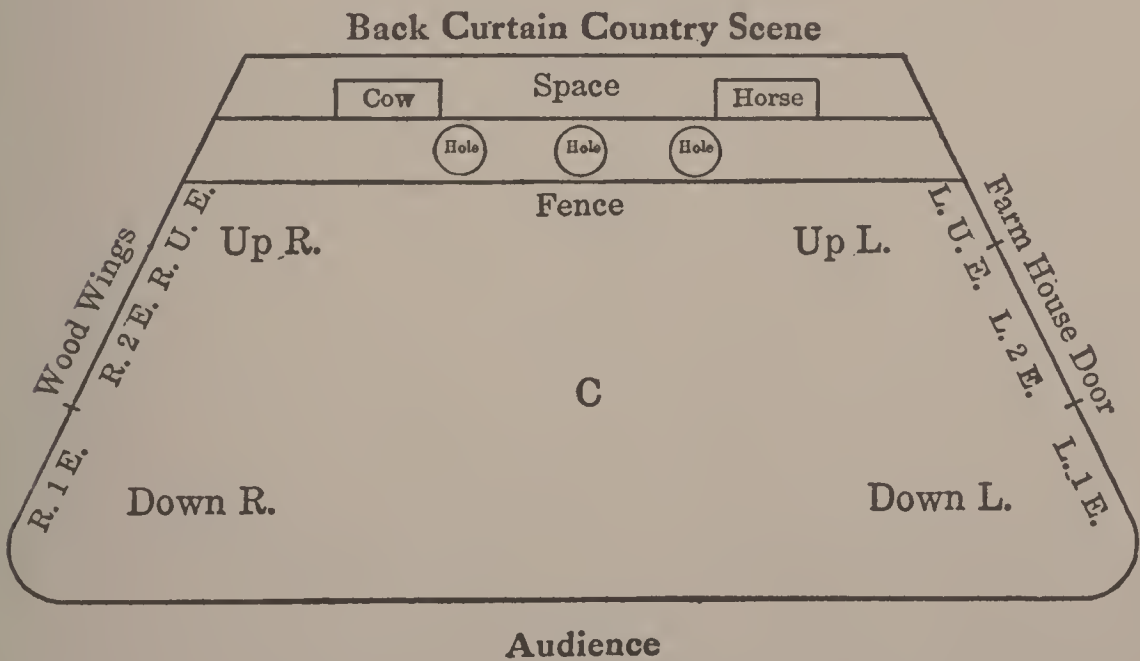


Diagram of Stage for **NEW-FANGLED NOTIONS**



OUTWITTING THE WEASELS

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

All the characters in this play, with the exception of the Bird Lovers, are Birds and Weasels.

MRS. QUAIL  
MRS. OVENBIRD  
MR. QUAIL (BOB WHITE)  
MR. OVENBIRD  
MR. ORIOLE  
MR. WOODPECKER  
MR. ROBIN  
MR. BLUE GROSBEAK  
MR. MEADOWLARK  
MR. PURPLE FINCH  
MR. SCARLET TANAGER  
FUZZY SIDES  
BLUE BEAK  
SOME BLACK BIRDS  
EXTRA BIRDS

MR. WEASEL  
MRS. WEASEL  
WIZZY WEASEL  
WEEZY WEASEL  
LIZZIE WIZZY WEASEL  
FIRST WEASEL  
SECOND WEASEL  
SOME BIRD LOVERS  
A HERALD

# OUTWITTING THE WEASELS

## ACT I.

SCENE: *At the Home of the OVENBIRD. The back drop is a woodland scene. Wood wings at sides. Where such scenery is not available green boughs and branches may be banked at back and sides of stage to represent a woodland scene.*

*At center of stage at back is the OVENBIRD'S nest. Overture music, "Pop Goes the Weasel."*

*When the curtain rises the stage is dark, and through the darkness is heard the occasional "peeping" of a bird. Gradually the light comes on, and turns to amber as of sunrise. One by one the birds break into full song. This off stage work may be done by the children who have been rehearsed to use bird-song tin whistles. One by one the birds seem to trail off until the stage is silent, and only an occasional song is heard afar off. MRS. OVENBIRD is in her nest, but is not at first seen by the audience.*

MRS. QUAIL

*(Off stage at R.U.E.)*

Bob White! Bob White! Bob White!

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Putting her head out of the nest)*

Who calls?

MRS. QUAIL

Your neighbor.

MRS. OVENBIRD

But I have many neighbors. What is your name?

MRS. QUAIL

I am Mrs. Quail—sometimes called Bob White.

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Stepping out of her nest)*

Why of course. How stupid of me not to recognize your song. Do come in.

MRS. QUAIL

*(Entering R.U.E.)*

I hope I'm not disturbing you.

*(In looking at each other and speaking, they use one eye at a time, and move about with pretty little hops, to suggest the movements of birds.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, no, I'm glad to see you.

MRS. QUAIL

We are all out of insects at our house, and I came over to see if I could borrow one from you for a day or two.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Yes, indeed. Mr. Ovenbird just brought in a fresh supply this morning.

*(Pointing toward the entrance from which MRS. QUAIL has just come)*

There's a nice fat one right under that lower right hand branch. Take him along with you when you go.

MRS. QUAIL

Thank you so much. I wouldn't bother you, but Mr. Quail is so busy building. You know we've taken a place just a little way from here.

MRS. OVENBIRD

I'm glad to hear it. We must see each other often.

MRS. QUAIL

Yes indeed. There are so few families left who still build their nests on the ground that we should not lose track of each other.

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(After taking a few little hops on the ground)*

Mrs. Quail.

MRS. QUAIL

Yes, Mrs. Ovenbird?

MRS. OVENBIRD

Do you ever feel nervous on the ground—I mean, when Mr. Quail is away?

MRS. QUAIL

Why no, I think it is much safer on the ground than on a bough.

MRS. OVENBIRD

But I get nervous, as I sit here on the nest all day long, and thoughts come to me.

MRS. QUAIL

You should get out more. You are growing melancholy.

MRS. OVENBIRD

I can't stay away from the eggs, or they'll get cold. Besides, I'm not self reliant, like you. I don't know what I'd do in case of danger.

MRS. QUAIL

Can't you trail your wing?

MRS. OVENBIRD

What?

MRS. QUAIL

Whenever I hear anybody coming near my nest I just trail my wing like this—

*(She circles around the stage, trailing one wing)*

Then, if it's anyone who intends to harm us, he follows me as he thinks I'm wounded and easy to catch, and all of a sudden, when I have lured him away from my nest, I fly off, and leave him wondering.



MRS. OVENBIRD

I never seem to be able to do practical things like that. I'm afraid I'm too much of a dreamer.

MRS. QUAIL

Well, I suppose some of us must be practical, and some must dream and think and learn.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Dear me, I'm forgetting the eggs. Just come and look.

MRS. QUAIL

*(As she comes to the door of the nest)*

Well, well, well: One, two, three, four, five, six. I hope you'll bring every one of them through safely.

MRS. OVENBIRD

These are anxious days for me. You see Mr. Ovenbird is kept so busy gathering insects. He's such a good provider.

MRS. QUAIL

That's a very good trait in a husband.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, we're a very happy couple.

*(There is a crackling sound heard outside. Both birds start.)*

Didn't you think you heard something?

MRS. QUAIL

Yes, I thought I heard a footstep.

MRS. OVENBIRD

I wish Mr. Ovenbird would come. I'm growing nervous.

MRS. QUAIL

*(Trying to reassure her)*

It may have been just the wind.

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Half whispering)*

I'm terrified.

MRS. QUAIL

What makes you so nervous?

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(In a tone filled with fear)*

There is a terrible family who live not far from here, and I don't feel safe.

MRS. QUAIL

What is their name?

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Coming out more strongly)*

Weasels!

*(MRS. QUAIL starts, and nearly tumbles back on her tail.)*

I see you have heard of them before.

MRS. QUAIL

*(Shaking her feathers and composing herself)*

Yes, I have. They've got a bad reputation.

*(Again they are startled by an apparent noise in the thicket. MRS. QUAIL runs and hides in the branches at R. 2nd E. and MRS. OVENBIRD re-enters the nest silently. As the birds disappear, the WEASEL runs swiftly across the stage from R. 1st E. to L. 1st E., his tail flying in the air. After a moment MRS. QUAIL comes out from under cover.)*

What a fright that did give me.

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Putting her head out of nest)*

What was it?

MRS. QUAIL

You won't be nervous if I tell you?

MRS. OVENBIRD

I promise.

MRS. QUAIL

Well—it was a weasel. Are you nervous?

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Weakly)*

Oh—oh—no—that doesn't make me nervous—not one bit.

MRS. QUAIL

I feel a little nervous myself.

MRS. OVENBIRD

I wish we had never followed the custom of building our nests on the ground.

MRS. QUAIL

One of the things I don't like about it, is we always have to wear such plain clothes—such dark, serviceable colors.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Yes—I sometimes long for brighter colors too.

MRS. QUAIL

Oh, I think you are beautiful—but I am just a plain, dowdy little thing. Look at me.

MRS. OVENBIRD

But you're a kind neighbor and a good friend.

MRS. QUAIL

But I wish I could sing, really beautifully—my song is monotonous.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Why, no it isn't—but I do wish that we could both have all our heart's desire—to build our nests on some high swaying branch, to have gay colored dresses, and to sing all day long, without a care.

MR. ORIOLE

*(At L. 2nd E.)*

Water! Water!

*(MRS. OVENBIRD has come out of the nest.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

What's the matter?

MR. ORIOLE

I'm wounded.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, poor thing. Come right in.

*(MR. ORIOLE comes in, pathetically trailing one wing.)*

How did it happen?

MR. ORIOLE

I was swinging on a bough.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Yes—I was just saying—

MR. ORIOLE

I was so happy, and I was singing, oh, how I was singing.

*(MRS. OVENBIRD and MRS. QUAIL exchange glances, as they are reminded of their recent conversation.)*

MRS. QUAIL

How wonderful it must be to sing like that.

MR. ORIOLE

It seemed to me I never felt so happy.

MRS. OVENBIRD

And who hurt you?

MR. ORIOLE

A boy with a slingshot.

MRS. QUAIL

How could he see you when you were up so high?

MR. ORIOLE

He saw my bright colored dress—

MRS. QUAIL

Oh, I see—It's the bright dress they want.

MRS. OVENBIRD

It seems that a bird isn't safe anywhere—either on a bough or on the ground.

*(Sympathetically)*

I wish I had something for you to eat—but Mr. Ovenbird hasn't come home, and I'm all out of insects.

MRS. QUAIL

Give him that one you told me I could have. I really don't need it as much as he does. I'll go and get it.

*(She starts for R. U. E.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

You'll feel better after you have had some nourishment.

MR. ORIOLE

How kind you are.

MRS. QUAIL

*(Returning)*

The insect isn't there. It must have been stolen.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Or it may have crawled off. I'll see if I can find it.

*(She goes off R.U.E. and MRS. QUAIL moves toward MR. ORIOLE.)*

MR. ORIOLE

I don't think I could eat it. All I want is a little water.

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Re-entering)*

No, that sweet insect is gone.

MRS. QUAIL

I thought I saw a caterpillar out there the other day. Wouldn't it do?



MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, that caterpillar has been gone for over a week.

MR. ORIOLE

*(With all the life he can summon)*

Caterpillars! Ladies—I never touch them—but where, oh where can I get some water.

MRS. QUAIL

*(Pointing with her fingers bent like a claw)*

Do you see that red house there?

MR. ORIOLE

My eyes are growing dim—but I think I can see it. Are there any boys there?

MRS. QUAIL

Yes, but they do not kill birds. They love them. They have set out a drinking fountain, just for birds.

MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Piously)*

Heaven will bless them.

MR. ORIOLE

Ah, that's good news—I feel rather dusty.

*(He starts, but cannot move.)*

Alas, I cannot fly.



MRS. OVENBIRD

*(Wiping away a tear)*

Poor thing.

MRS. QUAIL

Come, I will help you.

*(They go off R. 2nd E. MRS. OVENBIRD watches them off sympathetically. There is heard outside a "tap-tap-tapping.")*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Who's there?

MR. WOODPECKER

*(Outside, at L. 1st E.)*

Mr. Woodpecker.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, come in, Mr. Woodpecker.

*(He enters.)*

I am surprised to see you here at this time of day.  
You are usually so busy.

MR. WOODPECKER

Yes, ma'am. I am usually busy.

MRS. OVENBIRD

What are you doing just now?

MR. WOODPECKER

I've agreed to pick all the insects off that orchard  
up there on the hill-side.

MRS. OVENBIRD

All by yourself?

MR. WOODPECKER

Oh, no, of course my family and neighbors will help me.

MRS. OVENBIRD

How is your family?

MR. WOODPECKER

They are all well, thank you. How is yours?

MRS. OVENBIRD

They'll be here soon. Just look, isn't that a pretty sight—?

MR. WOODPECKER

*(As he comes to the door of the nest and looks in)*

It is indeed, ma'am. You must take good care of them.

*(While they are looking into the nest, another WEASEL glides across the stage from L. 1st E. to R. 1st E.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Yes, indeed.

MR. WOODPECKER

To tell you the truth, Mrs. Ovenbird—that's why I came. I came to warn you about something, ma'am.

MRS. OVENBIRD

You look so serious. What is it?

MR. WOODPECKER

Weasels.

MRS. OVENBIRD

(*Jumping*)

Oh, that awful name. I am terrified whenever I hear it.

MR. WOODPECKER

And well you might. They are a bad lot, ma'am, a bad lot.

MRS. OVENBIRD

What are they up to now?

MR. WOODPECKER

I suppose you've heard about poor Mr. Oriole?

MRS. OVENBIRD

Yes—poor fellow—he just went by here with a broken wing.

MR. WOODPECKER

Well, the Weasels know about that, and they're on his trail. They know he can't fly with that broken wing.

MRS. OVENBIRD

(*Frozen with terror*)

And he has just passed by *here!*

MR. WOODPECKER

That's why I came to warn you. Keep in doors and remain very quiet. These are dangerous times—dangerous times, ma'am.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, thank you for warning me, Mr. Woodpecker.

MR. WOODPECKER

I know I've got a bad reputation, ma'am, and many a time I've done what I oughtn't to do. But I try to do a good turn once in a while.

*(He exits L. 1st E. As he does so, MRS. QUAIL re-enters R. 2nd E. She is trailing one wing, and enters hurriedly.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Why, Mrs. Quail, what's the matter?

MRS. QUAIL

Oh, I've had such a fright—oh, how my heart is beating.

MRS. OVENBIRD

What was it?

MRS. QUAIL

I took Mr. Oriole to the drinking fountain, and on my way back, who should I see just ahead of me but the Weasel!

MRS. OVENBIRD

What shall we do?

MRS. QUAIL

We must get under cover.

MRS. OVENBIRD

But I'm so hungry. Mr. Ovenbird has been gone all morning, and I haven't had anything to eat.

MRS. QUAIL

I'm hungry too. We'll have to get some grass seeds and insects—just enough to stay us—and then we must keep quiet for a while.

(MRS. OVENBIRD *starts toward R. 2nd E.*  
MRS. QUAIL *stops her.*)

No, there might be weasels there. Come this way with me.

(*They both go off R.U.E.*)

BOB WHITE

(*Off stage at L.U.E.*)

Bob White! Bob White!

MR. OVENBIRD

(*Off stage at R. 1st E.*)

Teacher! Teacher! Teacher!

(*They both enter simultaneously.*)

BOB WHITE

Mr. Ovenbird, how do you do?

MR. OVENBIRD

Bob White! How do *you* do?

BOB WHITE

I was looking for my wife. Have you seen her anywhere about?

MR. OVENBIRD

No, I haven't. I'm anxious about my wife too. I've

been gone all morning, and I'm afraid she's without food.

*(He goes and looks in the nest.)*

Just as I supposed. She has had to go in search of food for herself.

BOB WHITE

Does she ever scold you when you fail to bring food?

MR. OVENBIRD

Never. When she hears what I've been through this morning, I know she'll be sorry.

BOB WHITE

What have you been through?

MR. OVENBIRD

I've had an awful morning, and that's why I've had to come home empty handed.

BOB WHITE

Tell me about it.

MR. OVENBIRD

Just where the insects were thickest and sweetest, I had to keep dodging a boy with a sling-shot.

BOB WHITE

You don't say so.

MR. OVENBIRD

Yes, and I've just heard that Mr. Oriole had been wounded.



BOB WHITE

Yes, I've heard about it too. Poor fellow. Will he recover?

MR. OVENBIRD

I think so. The last I heard of him he was at the drinking fountain. Some water will revive him.

BOB WHITE

There hasn't been much rain of late.

MR. OVENBIRD

That's true, but someone surely will remember to fill the fountain.

*(The BLUE GROSBEEK enters R. 2nd E.)*

MR. BLUE GROSBEEK

I am looking either for Mrs. Quail or for Mrs. Ovenbird. Can you tell me if they live anywhere about here?

MR. OVENBIRD

Mrs. Ovenbird is not at home just this moment, but I am Mr. Ovenbird.

BOB WHITE

And I am Mr. Quail, or Bob White, as I am familiarly called.

MR. BLUE GROSBEEK

I am the bearer of sad tidings.

MR. OVENBIRD

Tell us what it is.

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

Mr. Oriole is dead.

MR. OVENBIRD and BOB WHITE

What?

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

Dead.

MR. OVENBIRD

I thought he had reached the fountain.

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

So he did. But alas, it was empty. They had forgotten to fill it.

BOB WHITE

Dear, dear, dear, how sad this is.

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

It is indeed. It is a sad thing when a bird dies.

BOB WHITE

He was such a handsome fellow, too.

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

That's why they wanted him.

MR. OVENBIRD

When is he to be buried?

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

That's another thing I wanted to speak of. The news has spread all through the forest, and all the



birds feel that there should be a fine funeral. Mr. Oriole was such a favorite.

MR. OVENBIRD

If I can be of any service to you, Mr. . . . may I ask your name?

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

My name is Blue Grosbeak. I live down here by the roadside.

MR. OVENBIRD

Ah, Mr. Blue Grosbeak. Can I serve you in any way?

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

Yes, it would help very much if you would consent to be Master of Ceremonies.

MR. OVENBIRD

Is a Master of Ceremonies strictly necessary at a bird's funeral?

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

Well, not always. But this is a special case. You see there seems to be some question about the etiquette of the funeral.

MR. OVENBIRD

Indeed?

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

It's in regard to the matter of dress. All the birds had planned to assemble here, at your place, which we all know—and go in procession to the fountain, to take a last look at Mr. Oriole.

MR. OVENBIRD

That seems to me a beautiful idea.

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

But someone objected and said that none of us were properly dressed.

MR. OVENBIRD

Oh, I begin to see the point.

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

So they would consider it a great favor if you would look at them and tell them what you think about it. They will take whatever advise you and Mrs. Ovenbird will give them.

MR. OVENBIRD

I shall be glad to advise them. But I would rather not mention this death to Mrs. Ovenbird just yet—she is so tender-hearted.

BOB WHITE

And Mrs. Quail has been very nervous of late. Perhaps it would be just as well not to disturb her either.

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

I will respect your wishes.

MR. MEADOWLARK

*(Entering L.U.E.)*

Is this where we are to meet? My name is Mr. Meadowlark. I am one of the mourners.

MR. OVENBIRD

*(Eyeing him critically)*

I am afraid that costume will not do. That's a pretty bright yellow for such a sad occasion.

*(MR. MEADOWLARK reluctantly goes up R.)*

MR. ROBIN

*(Entering L. 2nd E.)*

Am I all right?

MR. OVENBIRD

*(Horried)*

Surely you are not going to attend your own cousin's funeral in that gay costume, Mr. Robin!

MR. ROBIN

What's the matter with it?

MR. OVENBIRD

It's entirely too gaudy for a funeral dress—and for such a near relative too.

MR. ROBIN

*(Resignedly)*

Well, I agreed to do whatever you say. But if you call this gaudy, wait till you see some of the others. Whew!

THE PURPLE FINCH

*(Entering L. 1st E.)*

I have just overheard what you said, and it makes me feel very uneasy about my own dress.

MR. OVENBIRD

I'm sorry, Mr. Purple Finch—your costume is beautiful, but it is not—not—ap—appropriate—for such a sad occasion as this.

MR. BLUE GROSBEAK

*(Looking off toward R.U.E.)*

Ah, here comes someone—oh, how beautiful!

*(All the birds turn their heads in the direction of R.U.E. MR. SCARLET TANAGER comes on with proud tread.)*

THE SCARLET TANAGER

I am sorry to be late, but I had to preen my feathers, and it took me some little time.

*(All the birds look at him and shake their heads disapprovingly.)*

MR. OVENBIRD

Mr. Scarlet Tanager—I am sorry to have to disappoint one so beautiful—but you are not properly dressed for this funeral . . . too gay, altogether too gay.

MR. SCARLET TANAGER

But I have black wings.

MR. OVENBIRD

They only make you all the more striking—and always at a funeral you must be quietly dressed.

MR. SCARLET TANAGER

What shall I do?

MR. OVENBIRD

Just step over here with the others.

(MR. SCARLET TANAGER *joins the others up L.*)

(*To MR. BLUE GROSBEAK*)

Tell all the birds of the forest to assemble here—  
but tell them they must not come gaily dressed.

(MR. BLUE GROSBECK *exits R.U.E.*)

BOB WHITE

I have a suggestion that may solve the problem.

MR. OVENBIRD

And what is that?

BOB WHITE

We will wait until the others come. If there are any amongst them who are dressed quietly enough to attend the funeral, we will permit them to attend, but if they are too gaily dressed, we must have some special mourners.

(*From R.U.E. there now enter other birds, all gorgeously attired, each one outdoing the other. MR. OVENBIRD is in dismay. When they are all ranged at the back of the stage, forming a long row, MR. OVENBIRD speaks.*)

MR. OVENBIRD

Now, Mr. Bob White, we will have your suggestion.

BOB WHITE

*(As though making a speech)*

Fellow songsters—since you have been so kind as to come, we feel that it would not be entirely right to deny you the privilege of paying your last respects to poor Mr. Oriole.

MR. OVENBIRD

That's true, but what can we do? These costumes are shocking for a funeral.

BOB WHITE

Wait! In my travels this morning I came upon a company of friends whom I met last year. I should like to have them lead the procession, and the others may follow at a respectful distance.

MR. OVENBIRD

What is the name of your friends?

BOB WHITE

Blackbirds.

MR. OVENBIRD

Blackbirds? Oh, I see.

BOB WHITE

They are professional mourners, and are ready at all times to attend funerals.



MR. OVENBIRD

Have they heard about Mr. Oriole's death?

BOB WHITE

Of course—the news has spread everywhere.

*(A great twittering is heard outside. BOB WHITE turns toward L. 1st E. Two Blackbirds enter.)*

Ah, here you are. You have come just in time. Will you chant us a dirge for our dead comrade, Mr. Oriole, who was ruthlessly killed?

*(The two leaders are at L. 1st E. and as they start across the stage from L. to R. singing the following dirge, they are followed by other Blackbirds who take up the strain off stage, then fall in line behind them. As the last of the Blackbirds reach about center of stage, the brightly colored birds fall into line behind them, swelling the chorus at the second verse. The dirge is by Sir Walter Scott.)*

He is gone on the mountain,  
He is lost to the forest,  
Like a summer dried fountain,  
When our need was the sorest.

*(All the birds together in a wailing chant)*

Like the dew on the mountain,  
Like the foam on the river,  
Like the bubble on the fountain,  
He is gone and forever.

*(Still chanting, they pass off stage, and as they do so, a Weasel is seen to enter glidingly from*

*L.U.E., and regard them with great interest. The stage darkens, and as the curtain falls, nothing but two glowing eyes can be seen through the darkness.)*

*End of Act I.*



## ACT II

SCENE: *At the Weasel's Den. The stage is set exactly as in the first act except that the Ovenbird's nest has been drawn off, and there is a round aperture or "hole" at back through which the WEASELS go and come. A bit of shrubbery may be changed here and there to give the place the illusion of being a different part of the woods.*

MR. WEASEL and MRS. WEASEL are discovered.  
MR. WEASEL is lying down.)

MR. WEASEL

*(Yawning, as he stirs himself)*

Heigh-ho.

*(He strokes his long moustache.)*

MRS. WEASEL

Hush, you'll wake the children.

MR. WEASEL

It's time for them to wake up. It will soon be dark.

MRS. WEASEL

But they're very tired, especially Weezy and Wizzy.

MR. WEASEL

Why should they be tired? They've never done one good night's work in their lives.

MRS. WEASEL

Well, you know they're growing very fast.

MR. WEASEL

I haven't noticed it.

MRS. WEASEL

Of course you haven't. It takes a mother's eye to notice things.

MR. WEASEL

Well, I wish they'd hurry up and help to earn the living. This is a pretty big family for one weasel to support.

MRS. WEASEL

Wizzy and Weezy are doing all they can. You must remember they are young.

MR. WEASEL

*(Becoming a bit disagreeable)*

I tell you, madam, you are always making excuses for your two good-for-nothing sons.

MRS. WEASEL

*(A bit nettled herself)*

Wizzy and Weezy have been out every night this moon looking for bird's nests.

MR. WEASEL

*(Brightening)*

Birds' nests!

*(Rubbing his paws)*

Those are two fine sons of mine.

MRS. WEASEL

Oh—I thought they were *mine*.

MR. WEASEL

Well, it's all the same. What's yours is mine. Rout them out.

MRS. WEASEL

No, let them sleep a while longer.

MR. WEASEL

You're spoiling them.

MRS. WEASEL

Well, to tell you the truth, it isn't all motherly love.

MR. WEASEL

What is it?

MRS. WEASEL

Shh! You can go out when you please, but I must stay at home. How would you like to have five babies getting under your feet and hanging on to you with twenty paws, and sometimes even scratching you with a hundred claws?

MR. WEASEL

Whew! Have they got *that* many claws?

MRS. WEASEL

Yes—but I don't mind it except when I'm tired.

*(There is a great scrimmage heard inside the hole, and the following speeches are heard from off stage at back.)*

WIZZY

You don't know what I know.

WEEZY

I do, too.

WIZZY

You don't.

WEEZY

I do.

WIZZY

You're afraid in the daylight.

WEEZY

You're a liar.

WIZZY

You're another.

LIZZY WIZZY

*(In a shrill voice)*

I'll tell Mother you're fighting.

WIZZY

Shut up.

LIZZY WIZZY

Shut up yourself.

*(All the other WEASELS off stage add to the confusion ad lib.)*

MRS. WEASEL

Children! CHILDREN! Stop that this minute.

*(LIZZY WIZZY comes out of the hole, hitting back as she comes.)*

MRS. WEASEL

Lizzy Wizzy, what are they fighting about?

LIZZY WIZZY

Nothing.

MRS. WEASEL

That's what *everybody* fights about.

WIZZY

*(Coming out of the hole)*

Lizzy Wizzy, you're a liar.

LIZZY WIZZY

Wizzy, you're another.

MR. WEASEL

Lizzy Wizzy, you must not speak to Wizzy like that. Wizzy, you behave yourself.

*(MR. WEASEL takes WIZZY by the ear and leads him down stage. All the WEASELS come out one by one. There are five in all. WEEZY is the last to come, and as he arrives, WIZZY breaks away from MR. WEASEL.)*

WIZZY

There's Weezy. Now I'll get you.

*(WIZZY and WEEZY "spar off" preliminary to boxing, while all the little Weasels keep up the excitement with the following shouts.)*

FIRST WEASEL

Goody! Goody! Goody!

SECOND WEASEL

Give it to him Wizzy.

FIRST WEASEL

*(Who takes the opposite side of the stage)*

Look out, Weezy, he'll get you.

SECOND WEASEL

Bully for you, Wizzy.

FIRST WEASEL

Dodge it, Weezy, dodge it.

SECOND WEASEL

*(To the FIRST WEASEL)*

You shut up, or I'll get you.

MRS. WEASEL

Children, children! What language! Stop it this minute!

*(They subside.)*

MR. WEASEL

I declare, I don't know what this younger generation is coming to.

MRS. WEASEL

*(Relenting)*

Oh, don't be too hard on them.



MR. WEASEL

When I was a young fellow we never thought of acting like this before our parents. It's outrageous, that's what it is. It's outrageous. Huh! Huh! Huh!

*(Working himself up into a great rage, and with much shaking of his tail, he marches off R. U. E. as the "children," rather crestfallen and subdued, stand and watch him.)*

MRS. WEASEL

*(As MR. WEASEL is going out)*

I don't see what you're so cross about. I think they're all very well behaved children.

*(To the children)*

Now, darlings, come and tell me all about it.

WIZZY

*(Coming toward his Mother)*

Last night I had an awful adventure.

*(This is spoken in a tone intended to inspire awe.)*

WEEZY

*(Breaking in)*

So did I.

WIZZY

My adventure was awfuller than your adventure.

WEEZY

Huh! No such thing.

*(Seeing that hostilities are about to break out again, MRS. WEASEL speaks.)*

MRS. WEASEL

Let each one tell his story, and I'll decide. Now Wizzy, you tell me what happened last night—and Weezy, you keep quiet till Wizzy has finished.

WEEZY

Yes'm.

*(He continues, however, to throw glances of fire at WIZZY.)*

WIZZY

Well, I was taking a walk last night by myself—

WEEZY

So was I.

MRS. WEASEL

Weezy, be quiet.

WEEZY

Yes'm.

MRS. WEASEL

Go on, Wizzy.

WIZZY

*(Romantically)*

The moonlight was beautiful—a gentle breeze was stirring, wafting to my nostrils the perfume of the flowers—



WEEZY

Huh—all you cared for the smell of flowers—

WIZZY

All the world was bathed in silvery moonlight—and it was moonlight—moonlight—moonlight—everywhere it was moonlight.

WEEZY

Ah, cut that.

MRS. WEASEL

(*To WEEZY*)

Shh!

(*To WIZZY*)

Go on, Wizzy, it's beautiful. It reminds me of when I was young.

WIZZY

I was filled with a strange longing.

WEEZY

I know what you were after—you were longing for eggs.

MRS. WEASEL

Don't pay any attention to him, Wizzy, I find this very interesting.

WIZZY

Suddenly—I scented—an ovenbird's nest.

ALL THE WEASELS

Ah, how heavenly.

MRS. WEASEL

Children!

WIZZY

I approached the door—cautiously.

*(They all show keen interest.)*

I wanted that Ovenbird and her nest. In another moment the prize would have been mine—when suddenly—I was attacked by a huge monster.

MRS. WEASEL

*(In which she is joined by all the little WEASELS)*  
A bear?

WIZZY

Yes. A bear.

*(They all cover their faces with their paws.)*

A great, big bear.

LIZZY WIZZY

And did he eat you up?

ALL THE LITTLE WEASELS

*(Quick to realize LIZZY WIZZY's absurd remark)*  
Ha, ha, ha, how could he? He's here.

*(LIZZY WIZZY withdraws, abashed.)*

MRS. WEASEL

Weren't you frightened?

WIZZY

Frightened? Not I.

WEEZY

Oh, no, you weren't—huh!

WIZZY

*(Ignoring him)*

I showed fight.

MRS. WEASEL

And did you kill him?

WIZZY

*(Nodding in the affirmative)*

I left him for dead.

*(At this point WEEZY starts across the stage toward the hole, and one by one the WEASELS observe that he is limping.)*

MRS. WEASEL

Why, Weezy, what's the matter?

WEEZY

Oh, nothing.

MRS. WEASEL

But you are limping.

WEEZY

Well, no wonder. If you only knew what I killed last night.

*(The attention now all centers around WEEZY.)*

MRS. WEASEL

What did you kill?

WEEZY

Oh, never mind. You're all just crazy about Wizzy.

MRS. WEASEL

Come, darling, and tell Mother.

ALL THE LITTLE WEASELS

Please tell us, Weezy.

MRS. WEASEL

What did you kill.

WEEZY

*(Now that he is sure of full attention)*

Well, it was something awful. It had claws and jaws.

LIZZY WIZZY

A bear?

WEEZY

*(Contemptuously)*

Huh! Anybody could kill a bear. I kill a bear nearly every night.

MRS. WEASEL

And what do you do with them?

WEEZY

Oh, I just toss them aside. I don't care for the taste of them. What I killed last night was much more terrible than a bear.

MRS. WEASEL

What do you think it was?

WEEZY

*(In an awe-inspiring tone)*

I think it must have been a kangaroo.

MRS. WEASEL

*(MR. WEASEL enters. His mood is entirely changed.)*

MR. WEASEL

Ah, great news—great news!

MRS. WEASEL

What is it?

MR. WEASEL

I was taking a walk—just making a little investigation—not far from here, and I came upon the strangest scene my eyes ever beheld.

MRS. WEASEL

Do tell us what it was.

MR. WEASEL

A bird's funeral. Birds, birds, birds of every description—black birds, red birds, blue birds, yellow birds—and not far away, I saw a boy with a slingshot. What does that mean? Come now, which boy can tell me what that means?—

WEEZY

That means good hunting.

MR. WEASEL

Correct. Wherever you see a boy with a sling-shot—shortly thereafter you will find birds with broken wings—he seldom finds them all—and what he doesn't get—we get.

WIZZY

But father, what was this investigation you were making?

MR. WEASEL

*(In fine fettle to WIZZY)*

Come here. For some time I've had my eye on an Ovenbird's nest.

WIZZY

Where is it?

MR. WEASEL

Ah, that's the question. I'll tell you this much. Go straight ahead till you pass four trees, three rotten logs, five hazelnut bushes, and a swamp—

WIZZY

*(Eagerly)*

Yes.

MR. WEASEL

And it isn't there.

WIZZY

All right, I'll find it.

*(He starts off R. 1st E.)*

WEEZY

Ha ha. That was a good joke. But you'll tell *me*, won't you?

MR. WEASEL

(*To WEEZY*)

Come here. Keep along the edge of the meadow till you come to the weasel trap—then you turn to the left—and keep straight on, and it isn't there.

WEEZY

All right.

(*He starts off L. 1st E.*)

MR. WEASEL

(*To the WEASELS that remain*)

Now then, am I not a good papa? Do I not train you how to get your living?

ALL THE LITTLE WEASELS

Yes, yes.

MR. WEASEL

All right, then. Off you go, for there is good hunting. Take whatever you like, but don't get caught. Pop!

(*At this all the little WEASELS start off hastily toward the different entrances, as the curtain goes down to the music of "Pop Goes the WEASEL."*)

*End of Act II*



## ACT III

SCENE: *Same as Act I. A few days later. MRS. OVENBIRD comes out of her nest. By cocking her head first on one side and then on the other she makes observations.*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Come, children, it's time for your lesson.

FIRST LITTLE BIRD

*(Inside the nest)*

I'm sleepy.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, no, you've been awake and playing.

SECOND LITTLE BIRD

I'm tired.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Tired, after resting all night?

THIRD LITTLE BIRD

I'm hungry.

MRS. OVENBIRD

You've just had your breakfast. Come.

FOURTH LITTLE OVEN BIRD

I don't want to learn to fly.



MRS. OVENBIRD

At last we have the truth. Just think, if you try, in a little while you will be able to go sailing off ever and ever so high.

FIFTH LITTLE BIRD

I might fall down.

MRS. OVENBIRD

That's exactly what will happen if you don't learn to fly. Besides, what would you do in case of danger.

SIXTH LITTLE BIRD

Is it very hard to learn?

MRS. OVENBIRD

Don't think about that. Just come out and try.

ALL OF THEM

All right. We're coming.

*(Out come or "flop" the little birds, one after another. They are ugly, with great, broad bills, and are very infirm on their legs. MRS. OVENBIRD arranges them in a semi-circle around her.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Come now, see who can fly the highest. One, two, three.

*(A few wings flutter weakly, but not one bird can lift itself from the ground.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, you must do better than that. Come, try again. One, two, three.

*(The FIRST LITTLE BIRD flops a little distance.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Splendid! See how beautifully Blue Beak is doing.

*(BLUE BEAK'S movements are anything but beautiful, and no one but a proud mother could possibly admire them.)*

SECOND LITTLE BIRD

*(Crying)*

Boo-hoo! You love Blue Beak better than you love me.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Why Fuzzy Sides, whatever put that into your little head?

FUZZY SIDES

You didn't say I was beautiful.

MRS. OVENBIRD

You are beautiful, my darling.

*(FUZZY SIDES turns his face toward the audience, opens his bill wide, and to the outward eye is anything but beautiful.)*

*(MRS. OVENBIRD continues to admire him.)*

I only said Blue Beak could fly beautifully, and that's because he has tried.

FUZZY SIDES

I'll try.

(FUZZY SIDES *tries with considerable success.*)

MRS. OVENBIRD

Wonderful. Now then, all together. One, two, three—FLY! Fly away.

*(This may be done to music. The birds all rise, dipping up and down with wings and toes until they have mastered it.)*

That was a very good lesson. I'm proud of you. Now go back to the nest. One, two, three, Fly!

*(They rise, and with movement of wings that suggests flying, one by one they exit into the nest.)*

*(MRS. QUAIL enters from R.U.E. She makes a slight sound as she comes, which causes MRS. OVENBIRD to jump.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, it's you, Mrs. Quail. I thought it might be weasels.

MRS. QUAIL

Oh, isn't it terrible.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Shh—don't let the children hear.

MRS. QUAIL

Haven't you heard anything from Mr. Ovenbird yet?

MRS. OVENBIRD

Not a word. Have you heard from Mr. Quail?

MRS. QUAIL

Nothing, and I have been searching the woods for him everywhere.

MRS. OVENBIRD

I don't let the children know how anxious I am. I have gone right on teaching them to fly.

MRS. QUAIL

That's right. There is danger everywhere.

MRS. OVENBIRD

And it's been so lonesome—I haven't heard a song for days.

MRS. QUAIL

I just sit and mope. Oh, I wish we could hear some news. What can have become of them all?

MR. ROBIN

*(Entering R. 2nd E.)*

Dreadful news! Dreadful news!

MRS. QUAIL

Have you seen Mr. Quail?

MRS. OVENBIRD

Have you seen Mr. Ovenbird?

MR. ROBIN

Yes.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Why have they stayed away so long? We have been filled with terror.

MR. ROBIN

And well you might. There has been a great disaster.

MRS. OVENBIRD AND MRS. QUAIL

O-o-o-h!

MR. ROBIN

We were all singing a farewell chant for Mr. Oriole before laying him away, when suddenly we were attacked by weasels.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Weasels! Oh, how terrible.

MRS. QUAIL

Is Mr. Quail hurt?

MR. ROBIN

He was wounded—and so was Mr. Ovenbird, but they will recover.

MRS. QUAIL

Oh how thankful we are. Go on with your story.

MR. ROBIN

It was terrible. We were all excited, but we started to fly, and suddenly we became aware that someone was attacking us with stones.

MRS. OVENBIRD

The boy with the sling-shot.

MR. ROBIN

And then there were loud reports and flashes of fire  
that blinded us.

MRS. QUAIL

The man with the gun.

MR. ROBIN

Mr. Scarlet Tanager was the first to fall.

MRS. QUAIL

And I used to envy his bright plumage.

MR. ROBIN

Mr. Meadowlark was next to go.

MRS. QUAIL

And I envied him his color and his song.

MRS. QUAIL

You, who sing so beautifully.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Not always. His song never fails.

(To MR. ROBIN)

Go on, Mr. Robin, tell us the rest.



MR. ROBIN

I thought we were all to be slaughtered—when suddenly—I heard a cry on the hill-top.

MRS. OVENBIRD and MRS. QUAIL

*(Joyously)*

The Bird Lovers.

MR. ROBIN

Yes, the Bird Lovers. At the sight of them the Man with the Gun and the Boy with the Sling-shot sneaked away.

MRS. OVENBIRD and MRS. QUAIL

Oh, how wonderful!

MR. ROBIN

Now I must go back to help the wounded. Do not worry any more. Mr. Ovenbird and Mr. Quail will soon be here.

*(He exits R. 2nd E.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Oh, what a relief. Now make yourself at home, Mrs. Quail. We have nothing to do till they come.

MRS. QUAIL

Mrs. Ovenbird—I wanted to ask you something—I am just curious.

MRS. OVENBIRD

And what is that, Mrs. Quail?

MRS. QUAIL

You remember the day Mr. Oriole was wounded, you offered me an insect.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Yes, and when I went to find it, it was gone.

MRS. QUAIL

Yes, swallowed, I suppose—but where did the caterpillar go?

MRS. OVENBIRD

Don't you know what becomes of caterpillars?

MRS. QUAIL

No, I can't say that I do.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Then I'll tell you the most wonderful thing—they turn into butterflies!

MRS. QUAIL

Butterflies? How do you know?

MRS. OVENBIRD

I've watched them—patiently. I had been watching that one for days, and after you went, I found it again.

MRS. QUAIL

What did it do?



MRS. OVENBIRD

First, it found a nice comfortable place under a twig.

MRS. QUAIL

Yes, I've often seen them there.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Then it hung itself up by the tail.

MRS. QUAIL

Oh, mercy me!

MRS. OVENBIRD

Then each day it grew shorter and fatter, and then its skin cracked down the back, and then it changed some more—and then it turned into a butterfly.

MRS. QUAIL

I can hardly believe it.

MRS. OVENBIRD

Well then, you just watch for yourself, some time.

MRS. QUAIL

Then where did it go?

MRS. OVENBIRD

When there is nobody around, it comes and flutters all around this place. Sh—I think it is coming now.

It is very shy, and may not come if it sees us. You go over there and hide, and I'll hide here, and I promise you a beautiful sight.

*(They hide, MRS. QUAIL at L. 1st E. and MRS. OVENBIRD at R. 1st E. Presently there flutters in a beautiful butterfly with iridescent wings. Here may be given a beautiful butterfly dance, possibly to Grieg's "Butterfly" music. The Butterfly flutters off. MRS. QUAIL and MRS. OVENBIRD come out from hiding.)*

MRS. QUAIL

How beautiful it was.

*(They hear a slight noise. They listen.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

She may be coming back.

MRS. QUAIL

I hope so.

MRS. OVENBIRD

What if it shouldn't be the butterfly?

MRS. QUAIL

You go to the children. I'll hide where I was before. If it's the Butteffly, I shall delight in it. If it isn't the Butterfly, trust me to watch over you.

MRS. OVENBIRD

But suppose you should come to harm.

MRS. QUAIL

Never fear. I can take care of myself and you too.

*(MRS. OVENBIRD goes into the nest, and MRS. QUAIL hides L. 1st E. After an instant WIZZY comes on from R. 2nd E., sniffing as he comes. WEEZY comes from L. 2nd E. in the same manner. WIZZY catches sight of him, but without waiting for a good look, turns tail and runs. WEEZY himself is startled by the sudden movement of WIZZY and he also runs back. Presently they re-appear cautiously and advance until they are near enough, then suddenly spring, and grab each other, then they look into each other's faces.)*

WIZZY

Weezy!

WEEZY

Wizzy!

WIZZY

My brother!

WEEZY

My brother!

WIZZY

Were you here last night?

WEEZY

Yes. And it was you that bit me?

*(He walks off a few paces with a slight limp.)*

WIZZY

It was, but I thought you were a bear.

WEEZY

And I thought you were a Kangaroo.

*(They both stand and look at each other for a moment.)*

WIZZY

What did you come here for?

WEEZY

*(Pointing to MRS. OVENBIRD'S nest)*

I came here to rob this house.

WIZZY

So did I.

WEEZY

Let's do it together.

WIZZY

You know who lives here, don't you?

WEEZY

Yes, those rich Ovenbirds.

WIZZY

I understand they are worth at least six eggs.

WEEZY

Maybe more.

WIZZY

Shall we carry off Mrs. Ovenbird.

WEEZY

Oh, certainly.

WIZZY

I wonder if she'll show fight.

WIZZY

I don't know. They're spunky when they're setting. I wish father were here.

WEEZY

Now come. You sneak up on that side, and I'll sneak up on this side. You scare 'em, and I'll grab Mrs. Ovenbird. Then we'll eat the eggs together.

*(MRS. QUAIL has entered as they turn their backs and face toward the nest. She drops one wing and circles around the stage. WIZZY and WEEZY see her, and immediately lose all interest in the OVENBIRD'S nest.)*

WIZZY

You remember what father said?

WEEZY

He said if you see a bird with a broken wing, follow her—there's good hunting.

## WIZZY

Why should we bother with a setting bird, when all over the woods there are birds with broken wings.

(MRS. QUAIL *leads them off stage R. 1st E. and they follow her stealthily.* MRS. OVENBIRD *comes out of the nest.*)

## MRS. OVENBIRD

Was it the butterfly? Was it the beautiful butterfly? Mrs. Quail, where are you?

(MR. WOODPECKER *enters hurriedly R. 1st E.* MRS. OVENBIRD *jumps again, in nervousness.*)

## MR. WOODPECKER

Excuse me for not knocking—but I have a message for you from Mrs. Quail.

## MRS. QUAIL

Why she was here a moment ago. I was just looking for her.

## MR. WOODPECKER

But in that moment, she has done a great deed. She managed to tell me something as she went by. She said take the children and fly at once.

## MRS. OVENBIRD

Why, what has happened?

## MR. WOODPECKER

The Weasels have been here. They came here to rob your house, and they would have succeeded, but



she decoyed them away. She can't keep them long. They'll be sure to come back when they know they can't get her. Fly at once.

A LITTLE BIRD

*(Inside the nest)*

I don't want to fly. I'm sleepy.

MRS. OVENBIRD

I'm so glad that I didn't spend any time in worrying when Mr. Ovenbird didn't come back from the funeral. I went right ahead and taught my children to fly. Come children, you must fly at once.

ALL THE LITTLE BIRDS

*(Inside the nest)*

Why? Why? Why?

*(They come out of the nest and form a circle around her.)*

MRS. OVENBIRD

Because Mother tells you to fly, fly, fly.

*(Instantly they all lift their wings, rise up on their toes, and fairly fly off R. U. E., followed by MRS. OVENBIRD. MR. WOODPECKER exits R. 2nd E. MR. WEASEL comes on from L. U. E. He views the OVENBIRD'S nest with great satisfaction.)*



MR. WEASEL

Ah, I have long been waiting for this opportunity. What a feast I shall have. What a feast. It was clever of me to send the sons off in the wrong directions.

*(He goes up cautiously and peers into the nest.)*

Those two sons of Mrs. Weasel's must have found the nest after all.

*(WIZZY and WEEZY enter R. 1st E. MR. WEASEL sees them but they do not see him. It is evident he does not wish them to see him, so he hides in the OVENBIRD'S nest.)*

WIZZY

I don't see what became of her.

WEEZY

I don't either.

WIZZY

I looked everywhere and I couldn't find her. She certainly couldn't fly with that broken wing.

WEEZY

Then where did she go?

WIZZY

That's the mystery.

WEEZY

Now let's get back to business.

*(They sneak up stealthily together, and peer into the OVENBIRD'S nest. At sight of their father they almost tumble over backward. Outside there is the sound of a bugle, and WIZZY and WEEZY are startled.)*

THE FATHER

*(From inside the nest)*

Come in quickly, and hide with me. That's the bugle of the Bird Lovers.

*(WIZZY and WEEZY get into the OVENBIRD'S nest. A boy, dressed as a gorgeous little Herald, enters, blowing his bugle. He is followed by a group of Bird Lovers, dressed in green. They group at back, while the Herald standing center blows his bugle, and then speaks.)*

THE HERALD

Listen, oh people of the earth—listen to the message of the Bird Lovers. Protect the birds; feed them in winter. Give them water when the streams are dry, and in return they will do you service that you dream not of—but above all, they will be beautiful and sing for you.

*(There is a noise inside the nest.)*

## THE HERALD

Weasels! Bird Lovers—quick!

*(The Bird Lovers surround the nest, blocking up the opening. THE HERALD blows his bugle again. Instantly there is heard outside the music of the birds as in the first act. Then two or three birds hop on from different entrances. Then come MR. OVENBIRD and BOB WHITE, with bandages over their eyes, and their "wings" in slings. Presently the stage fills with birds of every description, who come hopping on to the music of "Pop Goes the Weasel.")*

THE END

NEW FANGLED NOTIONS

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

MR. BLOSSOM, a farmer who wears a white collar and patent leather shoes.

MRS. BLOSSOM

LIZA BLOSSOM, aged nine.

THE COW

THE HORSE

THE GANDER

THREE GEESE

TWO DUCKS

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

THE WHITE ROOSTER

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

THE BROWN ROOSTER

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER

THE BROWN HEN

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

THE SECOND ANCONA HEN

A SPECKLED HEN

THE FAWN COLORED DORKING HEN

THE GOBBLER

THREE TURKEY HENS

# NEW FANGLED NOTIONS

## ACT I

SCENE: *A Farm Yard. The back drop represents a country scene. At back is a board fence with three openings as of broken boards, large enough to admit a child's head. At L. 2nd is an entrance supposed to be the side door of the farmhouse, around which trail green vines. At R. and L. stand a "COW" and a "HORSE," their heads merely showing above the fence. Between the back drop curtain and this fence there is a space.*

MRS. BLOSSOM

*(Appearing at door)*

Liza! Liza!

LIZA

*(Off stage at R.U.E.)*

Y-e-s, M-o-t-h-e-r!

MRS. BLOSSOM

Supper is ready. Come, dear.

LIZA

I don't want any supper, Mother, dear.

MRS. BLOSSOM

Liza, come at once.

*(Liza comes running on R.U.E.)*

Why didn't you come at once when Mother called?

LIZA

Oh, Mother, I was so busy.

MRS. BLOSSOM

What were you doing?

LIZA

Watching the geese wag their tails.

MRS. BLOSSOM

What else were you doing?

LIZA

I was feeding the chickens corn.

MRS. BLOSSOM

Feeding the chickens corn? Liza, Daddy doesn't want those chickens to get too fat.

LIZA

But it's such fun to watch them trying to swallow everything at once.

MRS. BLOSSOM

Don't you know that chickens should be fed scientifically?



LIZA

The farmer down the road says that's just a new fangled notion.

MRS. BLOSSOM

What?

LIZA

*(Emphasizing her last remark)*

New fangled notions. He says college people don't know anything about farming.

MRS. BLOSSOM

That depends on what people learn at college. You see Daddy has been studying all about farming, and that's why we have come here to live.

*(Changing her tone)*

Now, Liza, tell me why you don't want any supper.

LIZA

I—I—had a piece of pie.

MRS. BLOSSOM

Who gave it to you?

LIZA

The farmer down the road.

MRS. BLOSSOM

Don't you know that you mustn't eat anything between meals?

LIZA

That's what I said—at first—and they all said *that* was all poppy-cock too.

MRS. BLOSSOM

Well, do you think they are wiser than Mother?

LIZA

(*Deliberating*)

As Daddy says, I have strange leanings in their direction.

MRS. BLOSSOM

Liza!

LIZA

(*Laughing*)

I was only teasing.

(MR. BLOSSOM *enters L.U.E.*)

Oh, here's Daddy.

MR. BLOSSOM

Well, I think we're going to be very happy in our new home, but we'll have to work hard.

LIZA

Daddy, do you know what the farmer's hired man says about you?

MR. BLOSSOM

No, I'd like to hear.

LIZA

*(Coming toward her father and emphasizing each word by patting on either cheek)*

He says you don't know anythink about horses, or cows, or ducks, or geese, or chickens, or turkeys.

MR. BLOSSOM

*(Answering back in the same playful mood)*

You don't say so!

LIZA

I do. And he says the family you bought this place from lived here for generations,—the man's father lived here, and his grandfather lived here, and his great grandfather before him.

MR. BLOSSOM

Well, do you know what I think?

LIZA

What?

MR. BLOSSOM

I think that he, and his father and his grandfather, and his great grandfather left a great many things unlearned.

MRS. BLOSSOM

How do you find things about the place, dear?

MR. BLOSSOM

Everything is in much worse condition than I realized when I bought the place.

*(He takes a poultry bulletin out of his pocket.)*

I've been studying this poultry bulletin, and I find that the hen-houses here are all wrong—nothing scientifically done.

LIZA

Daddy, do you know what the farmer's hired man says about poultry bulletins?

MR. BLOSSOM

No, what does he say?

LIZA

He says they're not worth the paper they're printed on.

MR. BLOSSOM

He seems to be a great philosopher.

LIZA

And he says you just wait till you come face to face with the Shanghai Rooster, and the Brown Hen, and the White Rooster, and the Gander and the Gobbler—you'll wish you were back in the city where you belong.

MR. BLOSSOM

Does he say that?

*(LIZA nods.)*

Well, it begins to look as though we were going to have some fun.

LIZA

What doing?

MR. BLOSSOM

Oh, tearing everything apart and building it up again.

LIZA

But, Daddy—are you sure—remember the man lived here all his life—and his father lived here all *his* life, and his grand—

MR. BLOSSOM

Yes—and not one thing has been changed about the place.

LIZA

So everything must have been all right—eh, Daddy?

MR. BLOSSOM

No, my dear. A great many things are all wrong. Without change and improvement we never make any progress.

MRS. BLOSSOM

What are you planning to do?

MR. BLOSSOM

I'm going to make sweeping changes. I'm going to tear down all those miserable old hen-sheds and build new, scientific ones, I'm going to build nests for the turkey-hens and cage up the Gobbler. I'm

going to have an incubator for hatching chickens,  
and—

*(Looking around)*

I'm not going to have that horse and cow standing  
so close to the door—they attract flies.

LIZA

*(Putting her hand to her stomach)*

Oh, Mother.

MRS. BLOSSOM

What is it, Liza.

LIZA

I—feel—queer—in my—my tummie.

MRS. BLOSSOM

Ah ha! That comes from eating pie.

MR. BLOSSOM

Liza, who gave you pie?

LIZA

Those people down the road.

*(They go into the house. After they go off,  
there is silence for a moment, and then THE  
HORSE gives a long snort.)*

THE COW

*(As she slowly turns her head toward THE  
HORSE)*

Did you hear what they said?

THE HORSE

I heard every word of it.

THE COW

What do you think of it?

THE HORSE

I confess I am greatly perplexed.

THE COW

So am I.

THE HORSE

I suppose he'll have an automobile.

THE COW

I suppose so. So he won't let us stay here because we attract flies.

THE HORSE

And think of changing me—I—I who have always been ready to gallop for the doctor every time there has ever been sickness in that house.

THE COW

I've never heard of anything like it. I've stood here all my life, and so did my mother, and my grandmother and my great grandmother before me.

THE HORSE

And so have I. And so has my father, and my grandfather, and my great grandfather before me.



## THE GANDER

*(Putting his head through an aperture in the fence at C.)*

So he is going to make sweeping changes, is he?

## A GOOSE

*(Putting its head through another aperture in the fence at L. of C.)*

He's certainly different from any man I've ever seen before.

## THE GANDER

I wonder what those shiny things are that he wears around his feet.

## ANOTHER GOOSE

*(Putting her head through another aperture in the fence at R. of C.)*

And what is that stiff white thing he wears around his neck?

## THE GANDER

I don't know. I hope he isn't stupid. I can't bear stupid people.

## THE GEESE

*(All together)*

Neither can we. We can't bear stupid people.

*(They stretch their necks around, goose-fashion.)*

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

*(Appearing on top of fence C.)*

Cock-a-doodle do! What I want to know is—*what* is an incubator?

*(He flaps his wings. The effort upsets his balance, and he hops back again. THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN enters cautiously from R. 2nd E., lifts one foot, turns her head from side to side, and goes toward the closed door of the farm-house, observing it with much interest. THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER enters L. U. E. THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER enters R. 2nd E. THE BROWN ROOSTER and THE BROWN HEN enter from R. 1st E. Two ducks waddle on from L. 1st E. and the WHITE ROOSTER enters R. U. E. They stray aimlessly about the stage, some of them venturing to observe the door, turning their heads from side to side as though looking out of one eye at a time. When they are in easy position for the following dialogue, THE BROWN HEN speaks.)*

## THE BROWN HEN

Well, what's to become of us? Who are these new people?

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

They interest me greatly.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

I am filled with dark misgivings.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

*(Who is naturally rude)*

Ah, you are always expecting something sad to happen.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

He doesn't eat enough gravel.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

He's afraid it will hurt him.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

This is a sad, sad world.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Oh, cut that. It gives me the blues.

## THE BROWN HEN

He's perfectly right. Nothing ever goes right in this world.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

I don't like to see you getting under his influence, my dear. He's a pessimist.

*(At the sound of this word all the HENS cock their heads.)*

## THE BROWN HEN

And what might that be?

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Anybody who has bad digestion.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

*(Ignoring him)*

A pessimist, my dear—

(Two ANCONA HENS, *and* one nondescript black and white and brown SPECKLED HEN stray on from R. 1st E., *and*, as he observes that they are inclined to listen, he includes them with a sweep of his claw.)

My dear ladies—a pessimist is one who always looks for the cloud on the other side of the silver lining.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

*(Breaking in)*

There is no such thing as a silver lining—anywhere.

## THE BROWN HEN

Of course there isn't.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

Well then, since I must put it in simpler terms—a pessimist is one who is always expecting the worst to happen.

## THE BROWN HEN

Well, the worst has happened.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

What do you mean?

## THE BROWN HEN

From what I have been able to gather, all our liberty is to be taken away.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

Who told you so?

## THE BROWN HEN

The Gander.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Oh, he's a regular old gossip.

## THE BROWN HEN

He's a perfect gentleman. That's more than I can say for you.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

*(Enjoying a bit of gossip himself)*

Tell us what the Gander said.

## THE BROWN HEN

He said that all our houses were to be torn down.

## ALL

*(Striking attitudes of horror)*

What?

## THE BROWN HEN

He said we wouldn't be allowed to roost in the trees any more, that we'd have to eat differently, and that—well, that we'd all just have to walk the goose step.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

That will come hard on the Gander.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

We are all heading straight toward destruction—  
I feel it.

ALL THE ASSEMBLY

Hear, hear. So do I.

*(These words are repeated by all until it  
spreads like a general alarm.)*

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

*(Coming forward)*

May I speak?

ALL THE ASSEMBLY

Yes, yes, go on.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

I believe this change is for the best.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

I'm rather inclined to think so myself.

THE BROWN HEN

What makes you think so?

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

*(Eyeing THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN  
sentimentally)*

Because *she* says so.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER

*(Glaring at THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER)*

G-r-r-r-r!



## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Please don't interrupt. I wish to bring a message of hope. As you all know, I come from one of the best and oldest families in America.

## THE BROWN HEN

Oh, what do we care about good families.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

It wouldn't hurt some of you if you had a little better manners.

## THE BROWN HEN

Oh, too bad about you. *You're* the rudest—the rudest—gentleman about this whole place.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

My dear, my dear, remember your own manners.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

*(After waiting until the angry looks and intimidations among THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER, THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER and THE BROWN HEN have subsided.)*

I've come from a good family, and I've noticed that many things about this place are far from comfortable—nothing at all like what I have been accustomed to.

## THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

She's perfectly right. The last time I sat I was uncomfortable all the time because there wasn't enough room for my tail.



THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

And there's not enough gravel around here, there's none provided for us, and you know we need that for digestion.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

That must be what's the matter with me. You know I have awful indigestion sometimes.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

And the food we've been getting has not always been hygienic.

*(Again, at the sound of this unusual word, all the creatures cock their ears.)*

THE BROWN HEN

Don't pay any attention to her. I hate change. These are just a lot of new fangled notions.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

You may call it what you like—but I call it progress.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

*(Clapping his wings for attention)*

And I predict here and now that the New Owner will be a complete failure.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

And I predict that he will succeed.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

Let us all meet here one week from today. If the Barred Plymouth Rock Hen is right, we all agree to stand by the New Owner; if I, the White Rooster, prove to be right—then the New Owner is to be overthrown—and I shall be cock of the walk.

## ALL THE FOWLS

All right, all right. A week from today. A week from today.

*(The NEW OWNER, MR. BLOSSOM, opens the door and comes out. The fowls all scatter and instantly the language changes.)*

## THE HENS

Caw—caw—caw—caw—caw! Caw—caw—caw—caw—caw!

## THE DUCKS

Quack, quack, quack! Quack quack! Quack!

## THE GEESE

*(Again putting their heads through the openings in the fence)*

Heeee! Heeeeeeee! Heeeee! Quank, quank, quank! Quank, quank!

*(THE HORSE gives a snort, THE COW moos, and the ROOSTERS crow.)*

*End of Act I*

## ACT II

SCENE: *Same as Act I, except that THE COW and HORSE are no longer there, and some potted plants are ranged along the fence. Red flowers have also blossomed on the trailing vines around the door. THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN is discovered, walking around, standing occasionally to gaze side-wise at the door. She comes nearer to it and stands gazing up, apparently in the hope that someone will come out. THE WHITE ROOSTER comes slowly on with his head bowed from R.U.E. TIME: A week later.*

THE WHITE ROOSTER

I knew it, I knew it.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Oh, how you startled me.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

It's just as I predicted. Things are going from bad to worse. Unless there is a great change ere roosting time tonight, I shall be cock of the walk.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

What's the matter?

THE WHITE ROOSTER

What's the matter? What *isn't* the matter? Everything about the whole place is changed. Nothing

---

is as it used to be, and the whole farm-yard is seething with unrest and discontent.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

All they need is a little patience. Everything will come out all right before roosting time.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

What grounds have you for still saying so in the face of all this confusion?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

I've been observing this New Owner closely and he fills me with confidence.

*(The two ANCONA HENS enter and start walking across the stage from R. 1st E. to L. 1st E. THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN and THE WHITE ROOSTER, interrupted in their own conversation, stand and observe them.)*

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

There's no use talking to her. She is determined to do it. You can't get her off that nest, and even a goose would know that those are not hen's eggs.

THE SECOND ANCONA HEN

Why, of course not. They're queer, marbly looking things.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

I do wish we could persuade her not to waste her time on them.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

(*Stepping forward*)

What seems to be troubling you, ladies?

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

(*Turning*)

A friend of ours—in fact, a relative—we think, has lost her mind.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

What makes you think so?

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

She's been acting very strangely of late.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

What has she been doing.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

She found some queer, blue, marbly-looking things in her nest when she wanted to set, and she insists that they are eggs.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

She should call in expert advice.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Don't worry about her. That's all right. I saw the man when he put them there. It was when he first came, and he handled them so carefully, I *know* they must be eggs.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

*(Enters distractedly R.U.E.)*

Oh dear, what shall I do? What shall I do?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

What's the matter.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

My children have been gone for hours, and I can't find them. I'm worried to death.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

What did you let them go for?

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

They went without asking me.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

'Are they in the habit of doing that? I thought your family had the reputation of being good mothers.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

I've grown careless, I know. I never pay much attention to them, and they stray off whatever they like.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

O—then of course you have trained them how to behave, so don't worry.



THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

Oh, I'm afraid I've been too indulgent.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

The one great danger would be—but surely you have taught them about that.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

What?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Surely you have taught them where they might eat and what they must avoid?

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

No—I've never paid any attention to their diet.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Why haven't you?

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

I've always supposed that was all poppycock—new fangled notions.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

I'm filled with dark misgivings.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

Oh dear, what shall I do, what shall I do. I'm nearly distracted.

(THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN *exits*  
*R.U.E.*)



## THE BROWN HEN

*(Entering in a temper R. U. E.)*

I'm as mad as a wet hen! I'm all upset.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

What's the matter?

## THE BROWN HEN

I was just taking a bath in the dust down there, and that old automobile came along and got me all excited. I nearly got run over.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Why didn't you get out of the way?

## THE BROWN HEN

I couldn't make up my mind which side of the road to go to. I'm so mad I could peck a rock in two.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

*(Entering R. U. E.)*

Calm yourself, my dear. You know these tempers are bad for your nerves.

## THE BROWN HEN

Oh, please don't bother me.

*(Looking scornfully at THE PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN)*

Some folks seem to have a great deal of faith in this New Owner.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

She forgets that today is the day we were to decide who is the greater prophet—she or I.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

You must prove to me that things are worse instead of better before I admit that you are the great prophet you think you are.

THE BROWN HEN

Listen to her talk. If she only knew what I know.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

I'd be glad to have you enlighten me. Please tell me what you know.

THE BROWN HEN

You just stay here around the door all the time—worshipping the New Owner—so you don't know what's going on. But let me tell you this. Everything is upset, we can't find our way around the place, and not one of us can find our nests.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Well, don't worry about that. The New Owner is building a lot of new nests, where we can have plenty of room for our tails, and where we can pick up our food without having to get off the eggs.

THE GANDER

*(Entering L. U. E.)*

I think I've made a remarkable discovery.

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, , ,  
, , ,

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Tell us what it is.

## THE GANDER

If I knew what it was, my dear lady, it wouldn't interest me so.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Well—tell us what it looks like.

## THE GANDER

It looks like a round, fat table. It fascinates me.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

*(Apprehensively)*

Has it anything to do with us?

## THE GANDER

That's what I don't know. The New Owner keeps looking it over, then he looks in a bulletin, then he looks it all over again, and seems to be planning.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

Where is it.

## THE GANDER

*(Looking toward L. U. E.)*

Right down there where the old hen shed used to be.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

I am filled with dark misgivings.



THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Have faith and wait.

THE GANDER

I know exactly where to find it. Come on, let's take a look at it.

ALL THE FOWLS

*(Talking all together)*

Yes, yes, let's take a look at it. Let's take a look at it.

*(Led by THE GANDER they all go off L. U. E., THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN goes up L. THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER enters L. 1st E. just as THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER enters R. 1st E.)*

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

*(Eyeing THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN sentimentally)*

You could make me believe anything.

*(A jealous spark is ignited in the eye of THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER, and the two ROOSTERS, holding each other's eyes raise and lower their heads for a minute. Then THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER, apparently satisfied that his honor has been vindicated, runs off stage after the rest. THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER lingers, and continues to observe THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN.)*

Why are you always so cold to me?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Because you are so rude to everybody.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

I'm never rude to *you*.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Yes, but if you are rude to others, you might turn rude to me at any time.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

I'm not as rude as the Gobbler.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

No, that's true.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

I can't bear that Gobbler. As a matter of fact I always avoid him whenever I can.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

That's where you are wise.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

*(With considerable vanity)*

Do you really consider me wise? Ah, if you only knew what that meant to me.

*(He struts a step or two.)*

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Don't flatter yourself too much.

*(He stops.)*

It doesn't take much wisdom to steer clear of that Gobbler. I think he is the rudest human being I have ever seen in all my life.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

As rude as I am, I am a gentleman compared with him. N'est-ce-pas?

*(THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN plainly shows by her manner that she doesn't understand French, and after deliberating a moment, goes on with her own train of thought.)*

And he is so cruel to his children, and so unkind to his wives.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

How shocking.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

It's pathetic to see those poor turkey hens wandering off, trying to make their nests where he won't find them and smash the eggs.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Does he actually do that?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

He actually does.



THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

The accursed villain.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

You have put it mildly.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Though I suppose it's his nature and you can never change that.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Oh, yes, you can.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

How?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

But putting a fence around him.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Whose idea is that?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

The New Owner's. I heard him telling his wife that those poor turkey hens would never again have to suffer the taunts and jeers of that cruel and detestable Gobbler.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Ah, now I begin to understand why you stand up for the New Owner. You admire him immensely, don't you?



THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN  
I do.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER  
And you always defend him, don't you?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN  
I always speak the truth as I feel it.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER  
How splendid you are.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN  
*(Pleased in spite of herself)*  
Oh, nonsense.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER  
If you knew how I adored you. You are so beautiful—every feather so perfectly marked—such fine manners—you are perfect.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN  
I forbid you to say another word.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER  
How cruel you are—tell me—is there another?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER  
*(Entering L. U. E.)*  
Ah ha! So you are still here. I forbid you ever again to annoy this lady.

*(The two ROOSTERS lower their heads, and*

*keep raising and lowering them for some time; then they spring into the air and lower their heads again. During this encounter THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN strays around calmly, lifting her foot occasionally, or pecking at a flower in the fence, paying not the slightest attention to the angry rivals. The NEW OWNER appears at the door. Again the language changes.)*

#### THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

*(Looking at the NEW OWNER with a worshipful eye)*

Caw-caw-caw—caw-caw!

*(The two ROOSTERS shake themselves and move off stage. THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER goes off R. 1st E. THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN moves up C., and THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER moves toward L. U. E.)*

#### THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

*(As he exits, speaking to THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN in an undertone)*

I have discovered your secret. You are in love with the New Owner. He will find me a troublesome enemy. Adieu!

*(THREE TURKEY HENS come on, stepping with high, deliberate steps. They observe the New Owner with some interest, and he watches them. They enter from 2nd and 3rd R. E. and cross toward L. 1st E. THE GOBBLER comes from R. 2nd E. and appears to be stealthily following them.)*

MR. BLOSSOM

You get back there, you old rascal.

THE GOBBLER

Gobble-gobble-gobble!

MR. BLOSSOM

Trying to find out where their nests are, so you can smash the eggs, eh?

THE GOBBLER

*(Who has also advanced toward C. while the TURKEY HENS, stepping side-wise and rather uneasily, cross and exeunt L. 1st E.)*

Gobble-gobble-gobble-gobble!

MR. BLOSSOM

I'm going to lock you up.

THE GOBBLER

Gobble-gobble-gobble-gobble-gobble!

MR. BLOSSOM

That will make you behave.

THE GOBBLER

Gobble-gobble-gobble!

MR. BLOSSOM

You cranky, ill-tempered, impudent old rascal. You

don't like children, so you'll have to go. Shoo! be off with you!

THE GOBBLER

*(Retreating back toward R. 2nd entrance)*

Gobble-gobble-gobble!

MR. BLOSSOM

Shoo!

THE GOBBLER

Gobble!

*(He exits R. 2nd E.)*

MR. BLOSSOM

*(As he re-enters the house)*

I think I'll get hammer and nails and start in on your cage right now.

*(The two ANCONA HENS come running on from L. U. E.)*

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

What's all the excitement about?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

*(Who has been taking in the situation)*

The Gobbler sassed the New Owner.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

Tell us all about it.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Well, the Gobbler was following the Turkeys, and

you could see by the expression on his face that he intended to smash their eggs.

THE HENS

The scoundrel!

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

The New Owner told him to go back.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

What did the Gobbler say to that?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

He told the man to shut up his mouth.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

Oh, horrors!

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

The New Owners told him he knew he was following the Turkey Hens to find out where their nests were, so he could smash the eggs, and what do you think the Gobbler said?

THE HENS

What?

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

He said "You're a liar."

THE HENS

O-o-oh!

## THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

It's a wonder there wasn't a fight then and there.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

I don't think the New Owner understood his exact words.

## THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

Go on, tell us the rest of it.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Then the New Owner told the Gobbler he was going to lock him up.

## THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

That must have made the Gobbler mad.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Mad? I'd hardly like to tell you what he said.

## THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

Oh, don't stop in the most interesting part of the story.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

The Gobbler let out a perfect string of abuse. I thought I'd have to put my wings over my ears. He said, "You come off, you old white-faced, chicken-hearted—"

## THE SECOND ANCONA HEN

*(Who has not uttered a word till now, shrieks out)*

Chicken-hearted? He'll pay for that insult yet.



## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

(*Continuing*)

Chicken-hearted, knock-kneed, bow-legged, whipper-snapper. I've done exactly as I've pleased around this farm all my life, and so did my father and my grand-father and my great-grandfather, and my great-great-*great*-grandfather before me.

## THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

What happened then?

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

(*Looking from one to the other as though the worst was still to come*)

The New Owner controlled his temper remarkably well for a human, and said, quietly, "Be off," and what the Gobbler answered—ladies, I simply cannot tell you.

## THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

There is no need. We have heard his language before.

(*THE WHITE ROOSTER enters L. U. E.*)

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Well, what have you found about the "fat round table," as the Gander calls it.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

We have all inspected it, we have looked at it with one eye, and then with the other, we flew on to it,



and off again, but none of us can make out what it is.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Then I wouldn't worry about it.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

The hour is drawing near, madame, when either your prediction or mine will come true—and I think I shall be the victor.

THE BROWN HEN

*(As she enters L.U.E. followed by THE BROWN ROOSTER)*

The moment I saw that New Owner, I knew that things would go wrong.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

What has happened?

THE BROWN HEN

The Fawn-Colored Dorking Hen will tell you.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

*(As she enters R. U. E.)*

Oh, what shall I do? I have found my long lost children, but there's something the matter with them, and I don't know what to do. Please tell me what to do for them.

*(THE TWO LITTLE CHICKENS enter dejectedly, R. U. E., opening and closing their bills.)*

THE WHITE ROOSTER

This looks like a sad, sad case.

FIRST LITTLE CHICKEN

*(Just as LIZA did in the first act)*

I—feel—queer—in my—my tummie.

SECOND LITTLE CHICKEN

So do I.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

What do you think is the matter with them.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Where have they been?

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

At the farmer's down the road.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

And what have they been eating?

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

Nothing but angleworms.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Who allowed these young chickens to eat angleworms?

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

Why—the chickens on that farm down the road were eating them—

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Don't you know that the poultry on that farm had the gapes? It is not safe to eat angleworms on a farm where the poultry have had the gapes.

## THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

What happens?

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

It makes little gapeworms grow in chicken's throats.

## THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

*(Uneasily)*

It does?

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Yes. That's what's the matter with your children. They've got gapeworms in their throats.

## THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

Oh, what shall I do, oh what shall I do?

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

The gapes may be cured with horse-hair loops.

## THE BROWN HEN

Yes, but there are no horse-hair loops to be had.

*(With an angry look at THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN)*

Everything about the place has been so changed and cleaned up, that there isn't a horse-hair to be found.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

So there's no hope for them.

(MR. BLOSSOM *opens the door and comes out, followed by LIZA, who is wearing a pretty red dress. The gapeworms continue to torment the little chickens.*)

LIZA

Oh, I'm so glad to be well again. I'll never again eat pie between meals.

(*She observes THE LITTLE CHICKENS.*)

Oh, Daddy, what's the matter with those chickens?

MR. BLOSSOM

(*Observing the Chickens*)

They've got gapeworms.

LIZA

What makes it?

MR. BLOSSOM

(*With a sly look at LIZA*)

They've probably been eating pie between meals.

LIZA

They can be cured with horse-hair loops.

MR. BLOSSOM

No, dear. That is a very old fashioned and cruel method. I'll go down to the village and buy a preparation that I read about in the bulletin.

(THE TWO LITTLE CHICKENS *move off L. U. E. followed by THE FAWN-COLORED*

DORKING HEN, *who is filled with concern.*  
 MR. BLOSSOM and LIZA move toward R. 2nd E.  
*Just at this moment THE GLOBBER comes down  
 R. U. E. At sight of LIZA in her red dress,  
 he shows a slight tendency to rising anger. LIZA  
 doesn't trust him, and slides out of his way,  
 following her father. THE GOBBLER follows  
 her, lifting his feet high as he steps.)*

#### THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Now, who is right? This was the day we were to meet here and see who was right. The New Owner studies and understands everything about us, and all we need is a little patience.

#### THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

I'm beginning to believe in the New Owner.

#### THE SECOND ANACONA HEN

So am I.

#### THE BROWN ROOSTER

I'm beginning to be won over myself.

#### THE SECOND ANACONA HEN

Did you hear him say that horse-hair loops were cruel?

#### THE WHITE ROOSTER

You can't cure chickens of the gapes without horse-hair loops.

#### THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

I believe that he will cure them.



THE BROWN HEN

Oh, you'd believe anything. You believe that those old, blue, marbly-looking things that the Speckled Hen is wasting her time on, are eggs.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

I was fooled once with a couple of door knobs.

THE SECOND ANCONA HEN

I detest being set, anyway. I think it's tiresome. I wish the Speckled Hen had better sense. And besides I don't think they're eggs.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

If they weren't eggs, the New Owner would never have put them there.

MR. BLOSSOM *and* LIZA *re-enter R. 2nd E. ALL THE FOWLS cluster up C. in hushed awe. MR. BLOSSOM is carrying a small white box. He and LIZA stop near entrance.)*

MR. BLOSSOM

Now we'll make them breathe in a little of this powder, and they'll cough up the gapeworms which are lodged in their throats.

THE SPECKLED HEN

*(Off stage at L. 1st E.)*

Come right along, children, come right along with Mother.

*(THE SPECKLED HEN enters proudly at*

*L. 1st E. and moves toward C., followed by a long line of little fuzzy ducks. As she observes LIZA and MR. BLOSSOM her language changes.)*

Cluck, cluck, cluck.

ALL THE LITTLE DUCKS

*(As they waddle after her)*

Quack, quack, quack. Quack quack.

*(LIZA and MR. BLOSSOM stand still and watch until the procession has passed off R. 1st E.)*

MR. BLOSSOM

Well, bless her old heart. She's hatched out those duck eggs at last. Now, let's go and cure the little sick chickens.

*(They cross over and enter the house.)*

*(All the fowls have been watching THE SPECKLED HEN and her Ducks, in consternation.)*

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

*(Triumphantly)*

There! What did I tell you?

THE BROWN HEN

They're the queerest looking chickens I've ever seen.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

*(In a motherly way)*

The darlings.



THE BROWN HEN

I'm glad they're not mine.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Poor, helpless little things. They need a mother, just the same as anybody else.

THE BROWN ROOSTER

I believe things are going to come out all right, after all.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Of course things will come out all right if you will only believe that they will.

THE SPECKLED HEN

*(Off stage at R. 1st entrance)*

Help! Help! Help!

*(All on stage start in alarm)*

My children, my children! They'll all be drowned. They've all gone into the water! O, help, help, help!

THE BROWN HEN

What did I tell you?

THE WHITE ROOSTER

I felt that some disaster was impending.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER

*(Entering from R. 1st E.)*

The Speckled Hen's whole family has committed suicide.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

By what method?

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER

Suicide by drowning.

## ALL THE HENS

O-o-o-g!

## THE BROWN HEN

I always knew that they were not right in their minds.

(To THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN)

This is what comes of trusting people with new fangled notions.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

Now, what have you got to say? It will soon be roosting time. One disaster follows another, and still you believe in the New Owner.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

I hardly—know. I feel dazed. And yet—somehow, in spite of everything I have faith in the New Owner.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER

I think, my dear, you are really going too far. I am afraid you are too idealistic.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

(*Bowing her head*)

Oh, don't *you* lose faith.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER

I feel sorry for you—but I feel that I must go over to the majority.

(THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN *bows her head and walks sadly toward R. U. E.* THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER *joins the group of fowls who have now moved toward L. U. E.* THE WHITE ROOSTER *comes down C. prepared to make a speech.*)

THE WHITE ROOSTER

In the face of this great calamity which has just befallen all of us—

THE SPECKLED HEN

(*Off stage at R. 1st E.*)

It's all right. Oh, what a fright I did get. Come this way, children, we must be going home.

(*She enters proudly, followed by the row of ducks, who appear to be scattering water from their wings as they cross the stage from R. 1st E. to L. 1st E.* THE ANCONA HENS *group with THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN and nod their heads approvingly. As they get well off the stage, THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER comes to the center and crows.*)

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER

Cock-a-doodle-doo.

*End of Act II*

## ACT III

TIME: *One Hour Later.*

SCENE: *Same as Acts I and II.*

*As the curtain rises LIZA enters L. U. E. looking backward uneasily as she comes. Presently THE GOBBLER looms into view, following her with stately tread. She attempts to reach the door, but he intercepts her. She moves toward R. 2nd E., he follows; she crosses back toward L. 1st E., he follows, his wings trailing, his head sunk in, his whole manner and appearance suggesting an unpleasant disposition.*

LIZA

Daddy! Daddy!

MR. BLOSSOM

*(Off stage at L. U. E.)*

Yes, dear. What's the matter?

*(His voice frightens THE GOBBLER, and he trots off R. U. E. without uttering a word.)*

MR. BLOSSOM

*(At door)*

What's the matter?

LIZA

Oh, Daddy, that old Gobbler chases me all the time.

MR. BLOSSOM

My mind was so taken up with those little sick chickens that I did not get a chance to finish his cage until just now. Now I'll attend to him.

LIZA

What are you going to do to him?

MR. BLOSSOM

I'm going to shut him up until he learns how to control his temper.

LIZA

Is that like being sent to one's room?

MR. BLOSSOM

Well—something like that—no one person should be allowed to disturb the peace of everybody else, you know.

LIZA

Is that why you're going to shut up the Shanghai Rooster, too?

MR. BLOSSOM

I'm going to shut him up because of his rudeness. His manners are shocking.

LIZA

Daddy.

MR. BLOSSOM

Yes?

LIZA

I'm never going to lose my temper, and I'm never going to be rude, and I'm never going to eat pie again.

MR. BLOSSOM

What is the cause for all these good resolutions?

LIZA

Well, I've been observing things about this farm-yard, and I notice that the Shanghai Rooster and the Gobbler upset the tempers of everybody around them—and then—about the pie—I'll never forget those chickens with the gapes.

MR. BLOSSOM

Well, I don't trust that Shanghai Rooster nor the Gobbler either, and the sooner we make them behave, the better. Come, we'll get their pens ready.

*(They go into the house. In a moment, THE GOBBLER stretches forth his neck from behind the fence at R. U. E., and seeing that there is no one about, comes on, followed by THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER.)*

THE GOBBLER

So they don't like us, eh?

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

It appears not.

THE GOBBLER

Well, I don't like them.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Neither do I.

THE GOBBLER

What is your grievance?



THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Jealousy. I'm in love with the Barred Plymouth Rock Hen.

THE GOBBLER

Foolish.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

And she treats me with disdain, while she adores the ground the New Owner walks on. What's yours?

THE GOBBLER

I know nothing whatever about sentiment—but on general principles I don't like anybody.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Ah, I see.

THE GOBBLER

And there are some things that I *particularly* dislike.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

What, for instance?

THE GOBBLER

Red. I despise red. It infuriates me.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

*(Trying to cover his red comb with his claw)*

I've noticed that.

THE GOBBLER

And that girl wears red all the time.



## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

*(Taking his claw from his head, and looking relieved)*

So she does. I wouldn't stand it, if I were you.

## THE GOBBLER

I don't intend to—if I can help it—but—but—did you hear him say he was going to put us in the lock-up?

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Oh, don't use that vulgar word.

## THE GOBBLER

Call it what you like. Are we going to submit to it?

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

No! We'll join the cause of the White Rooster. We'll start such a row in the farm-yard that the New Owner will forget to lock us up.

*(THE GANDER, followed by three GEESE, all walking the goose step, enter L. U. E. THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER now puts on a good deal of manner to cover what he has just said.)*

Ah—how do you do—how do you do.

## THE GOBBLER

*(Gruffly)*

How do. How do.

THE GANDER

How do you do.

THE GEESE

*(Meekly, after THE GANDER)*

How do you do. How do you do.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Well, what's the news?

THE GANDER

I've been looking at that fat, round table ever since.

THE GEESE

*(All together, as they stretch their necks  
around.)*

We've been looking at that fat, round table ever  
since.

THE GANDER

I think I've solved the mystery.

THE GEESE

We think we've solved the mystery.

THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Tell us about it.

THE GANDER

The New Owner thinks it will hatch out chickens.

*(THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER laughs.)*

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

*(Entering from R. 1st entrance)*

What's all this mirth about. I don't like it.

## THE GANDER

*(Ignoring him)*

Honor bright. I heard him telling his wife that he expected it to hatch out a whole swarm of chickens.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

What a calamity that would be.

## THE GANDER

And I've got another piece of news. There isn't an egg to be found anywhere about the place.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

What's become of them.

## THE GANDER

The New Owner gathers them all up and puts them in the round, fat table, and he believes that the *table* will hatch them out.

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

*(Who has entered R. 2nd E. and heard this last speech)*

And the Barred Plymouth Rock Hen believes it too.

## THE GANDER

Well, it would take a good deal of faith to make me believe that a round, fat table can hatch out chickens.

## THE GEESE

Well, it would take a good deal of—

*(They have started in to repeat what THE GANDER has said, but by stretching out his neck on either side he silences them.)*

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

Well, I've got a sensible little wife who won't believe any such nonsense as that.

## THE GOBBLER

Ah—to be sure. We can count on her.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

And where is the Barred Plymouth Rock Hen now?

## THE GANDER

She and the Barred Plymouth Rock Rooster are friends again. He is beginning to be won over to her side.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

*(Putting his claws to his head)*

Oh, I shall go mad! I shall go mad!

## THE GOBBLER

Are you going to stand this? She'll laugh at you.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

Go, all of you! Make as much trouble as you can.  
Roosting hour is near. Time is flying. Shoo!  
G-r-r-r-r!

*(All the fowls flutter off stage L. U. E. with  
the exception of THE GOBBLER, THE WHITE  
ROOSTER and THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER.)*

I'm in a terrible state of mind. She scorns me, and  
she must be cast down. What can we do?

## THE GOBBLER

*(Demoniacally)*

We can smash eggs.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

They're all in the round fat table.

## THE GOBBLER

*(Still more demoniacally)*

We can gather some more gapeworms for those  
sick chickens.

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

No! I refuse to do anything as mean as that.

## THE GOBBLER

Well then, you intend to go over to the losing side?

## THE SHANGHAI ROOSTER

I'll take the losing side if I must. But never shall

it be said that a little sick chicken was ever injured  
by a Shanghai Rooster! Cock-a-doodle-doo!

*(He exits proudly.)*

THE WHITE ROOSTER

*(Looking after him in consternation)*

He has deserted us. This is a great calamity.

THE GOBBLER

Ah, let him go. What do we care?

THE WHITE ROOSTER

But he may work against us, and our side may lose.

THE GOBBLER

We mustn't lose. If we do, that girl with the red  
dress will always be around here.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

*(Gloomily)*

But supposing those sick chickens should get better.

THE GOBBLER

They won't—After *I* feed them.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

And supposing that fat, round table *should* hatch  
out chickens—where would *we* be?



## THE GOBBLER

Your job is to stay here and upset everybody's faith in that fat, round table. Leave the sick chickens to me. It is almost roosting time.

*(With wings trailing, and stepping high, he marches off R. U. E. THE BROWN ROOSTER, THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER, THE GANDER and THE GEESE re-enter from L. U. E.)*

## THE BROWN ROOSTER

I wish the Shanghai Rooster wouldn't behave like that. He made me nervous.

## THE GANDER

Where has he gone?

## THE GEESE

*(All together)*

Where has he gone?

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

Oh, never mind about him. He doesn't count anyway. You must stand around and watch me upset the faith of all these foolish creatures.

*(THE TWO ANCONA HENS come on from R. 2nd E.)*

Ah, here come some of the ladies now. We're glad you've come.

## THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

Why are you glad?



THE WHITE ROOSTER

Because I want your support in the overthrow of this New Owner.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

What do you want me to do?

THE WHITE ROOSTER

I want you to say in the presence of all here, that you do not believe that this round, fat table will hatch out chickens.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

Why should I do that?

THE WHITE ROOSTER

Why, for one thing—to get even with him for all the changes he has made about the place—think of how badly you are treated.

THE FIRST ANCONA HEN

On the contrary, I have never had such good care, nor have I ever been so happy in my life.

*(THE WHITE ROOSTER and his friends are astonished. THE FIRST ANCONA HEN moves up C.)*

THE WHITE ROOSTER

*(To THE SECOND ANCONA HEN)*

Surely *you* don't believe in the round fat table?

## THE SECOND ANACONA HEN

I do believe in this round fat table.

*(More astonishment. She joins FIRST ANCONA HEN up C. THE SPECKLED HEN enters L. 1st E.)*

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

Ah, here is one who has suffered. Surely you cannot forgive the New Owner when you think of how he gave you those duck eggs to hatch out, and left you with those queer children to take care of.

## THE SPECKLED HEN

Queer children? I adore them. They are a little troublesome, but I love them, and I'm proud of them.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

Dear me.

*(THE SPECKLED HEN joins THE ANCONA HENS up C. or R. C. THE BROWN HEN enters L. U. E. Her whole manner is changed, and she seems quiet and gentle.)*

Ah, here is one we can count on. She has always been noted for her good sense.

## THE BROWN HEN

What is it you wish me to do.

*(All the attention is now centered on THE BROWN HEN.)*

THE WHITE ROOSTER

To declare that you do not approve of any of the changes that have been made, and that you do not believe that this round, fat table will hatch out chickens.

THE BROWN HEN

Certainly it will hatch out chickens.

(THE ROOSTERS *and* GANDER *start back in astonishment.* THE BROWN HEN *joins the group up C.*)

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

(*Entering from R. 2nd E.*)

Is there any news of my children — has anyone heard?

THE WHITE ROOSTER

Madam, I am afraid you will never see your children again.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

Why?

THE WHITE ROOSTER

I have reason to believe that they will never recover. I fear they are dead.

THE FAWN-COLORED DORKING HEN

(*Without being in the least disturbed*)

The Barred Plymouth Rock Hen told me that they would recover, and until I hear from her lips that they are dead, I shall have faith.

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

Wait til! you hear what the Gobbler has to say.

## THE FAWN-COLOR'D DORKING HEN

Wait till we hear what the Barred Plymouth Rock Hen has to say.

*(A ray of amber light, as of sunset, falls across the stage.)*

## ALL THE FOWLS

It is sunset!

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

It is roosting time!

*(THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN appears at L. U. E.)*

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

And we have won!

## ALL THE HENS

Our leader!

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

Stop! You call her your leader and she has proved nothing.

## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

*(Coming C.)*

Have you not seen that everything about the place has been improved. Are we not healthier, and better cared for?

THE WHITE ROOSTER

But where are the sick chickens? Answer me that.  
(THE GOBBLER enters dejectedly R. U. E., and thinking this last speech is directed to him answers.)

THE GOBBLER

I couldn't find them anywhere.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

This is getting serious.

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Here they are.

(From L. U. E come running on THE TWO LITTLE CHICKENS now completely cured. They join their mother joyously.)

THE WHITE ROOSTER

(After viewing them in astonishment)

Ah, but still, there is the round, fat table. You said it would hatch out chickens. Where are they?  
Ha, ha!

THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK ROOSTER

(Who has remained up R. to THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN)

Come, dear, don't you think you better admit that it can't be done. I have faith in you, but really, you know this round, fat table business is ridiculous.



## THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN

Now we will put it to the test. All who believe with me, stand on my right side.

(ALL THE HENS *cluster on her right side.*)

All who do not believe in me, in the New Owner, and in progress, stand at my left side.

(THE GOBBLER *is the first to move to her left side. He is followed by THE GANDER, and THE GEESE sway their necks uncertainly, not knowing which side to take. THE ROOSTERS range at the left of the BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN.*)

## THE WHITE ROOSTER

(*Observing the sunlight*)

It is one minute of roosting time, and nothing has been heard of the round, fat table. In another minute I shall be cock of the walk.

(*There is heard off stage at L. U. E. a "cheeping."* THE ROOSTERS, *in consternation, move further toward L. and THE HENS move toward R. as they look back, listening to the strange sound. THE BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN moves further up C. Presently two rows of little fuzzy chickens enter L. U. E. and march down center of stage. As they are in position standing in two rows, facing each other, LIZA opens the door L. 2nd E.*)

## LIZA

Oh, Mother and Daddy, come out, the incubator chickens are here. They're all walking now.

(MR. and MRS. BLOSSOM come to doorway. THE FOWLS all take partners and begin a simple little dance step. THE GOBBLER is the last to yield, but the music of the dance is too much for him, and after some preliminary stomping of one foot, he moves into line, and is joined by LIZA, who dances off with him as the curtain drops.)

THE END.











Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Dec. 2007

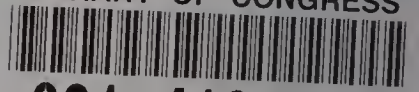
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